



December 11, 2002

Dear Tribal Leader:

As part of the recent amendments to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) was authorized to conduct a feasibility study of extending self-governance to non-IHS programs within the Department. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (OASPE), was given the responsibility for the study. In consultation with Tribes, OASPE reviewed the potential for transferring to the Tribes management of several DHHS non-health programs. The final report on this review of non-health programs will be released soon.

During the course of the study, OASPE discovered that there was very little empirical data on the processes for transferring program management to self-governing Tribes and on the outcomes associated with Tribally-managed programs. Systematic evaluation of these issues will provide information that could be helpful to Tribes who are taking over management of DHHS health and non-health programs.

However, since there are many unanswered questions about the feasibility of such a study, it would be premature to launch a full-scale evaluation. For instance, will quantitative data be available? How extensive would the study have to be in order to be scientifically credible? How much would it cost? Would Tribes be interested in participating? Consequently, as a first step, OASPE is funding a one-year study to determine if it is feasible to evaluate Tribal self-governance processes and outcomes. The study will develop options for designing such an evaluation and identifying Tribes that may be interested in and have the data capabilities for participating in the evaluation. The Department has contracted with Westat to conduct background data collection and site visits over the next 12 months. A description of the project is attached to this letter, as well as detailed contact information on the project.

We are interested in several kinds of Tribal participation in this feasibility study:

- A key group of Tribal leaders and health and social services directors who are willing to serve on a Technical Work Group.
- Several Tribes who are willing to participate in this study, and in a full-scale evaluation, if one is initiated.
- Other participants who are willing to participate in small group discussions to be held at upcoming national Tribal conferences.

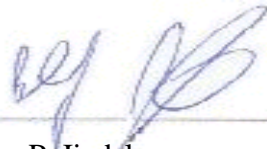
Please monitor progress of the study on our Self-Governance website: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/SelfGovernance> and provide ongoing advice and feedback, either directly to individuals included on the contact list or through your Tribal Association leaders. Results of the study will be sent to you next summer, with an overview of the next stages of this effort.

Sincerely,



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Merle W. Boyd  
Chairman, Tribal Self-Governance  
Advisory Committee



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Bobby P. Jindal  
Assistant Secretary for Planning  
and Evaluation

Enclosure

## **Tribal Self-Governance Evaluation Feasibility Study**

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (OASPE), in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), has funded a one-year project to assemble background information on Tribal Self-Governance and to assess the availability of data for and the feasibility of conducting an evaluation of the effectiveness and impacts of administering and managing health and other social service programs under Self-Governance. The primary tasks that will be conducted by Westat and its subcontractors, Project HOPE and Kauffman and Associates, Inc., include:

- \$     Compilation and synthesis of background information and existing research on the legislative history, experience, and effectiveness of Tribal Self-Governance, including identification of gaps in the research and limitations of previous studies.
- \$     Identification of a sample group of Self-Governance Tribes that meet specific criteria, management and data capabilities sufficient to support an evaluation of Tribally-managed programs, and indicating an interest in/willingness to participate in an evaluation.
- \$     Identification of likely research questions for an evaluation and the data that would be required to address each question.
- \$     Assessment of data availability, completeness, and comparability for Tribally-managed programs, relative to data that are available from Federal and State agencies that provide services to non Self-Governance Tribes.
- \$     Consultation and ongoing communication with Tribal leaders and Tribal organizations in designing, conducting, and reviewing findings of the feasibility study.

A Technical Working Group (TWG), consisting of Tribal leaders, directors of Tribally-managed programs, representatives of Tribal organizations, and knowledgeable researchers and data experts will advise the project on key issues and review interim and final project findings. The TWG will be selected from recommendations submitted to OASPE/DHHS; see contact information, attached.

This study grew out of the experience of DHHS participation in the Federal-Tribal consultation on Title VI of P.L. 106-260 that mandated a study of the feasibility of conducting a demonstration of Tribal Self-Governance of non-IHS programs. Since evaluation would be a part of a demonstration, and since there has been no comprehensive evaluation of Tribal Self-Governance of health programs, the current study will provide information relevant to the possible conduct of an evaluation of Tribal Self-Governance of either health or social services programs, or both.

## **Contact Information**

### **Sponsor:**

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### **DHHS Project Officers:**

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**Start Date:** September 2002

**End Date:** September 2003

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### **Project Director:**

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### **Project Consultants:**

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**PROJECT WEB SITE:** <http://aspe.hhs.gov/SelfGovernance>

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